Do It Yourself

Plein Air Panel Painting Easel

After painting plein air for many years, I have seen/used most every type of paint easel/box available. I then went through a period of making my own paint boxes - many quiet elaborate and complicated with all the bells and whistles. A few years back I was driving to New York City to teach a plein air landscape workshop. I realized my paint box was back in my studio after being in the car for 2 hours I had about three hours to figure something out. I swung by a hardware store, had them cut a couple of pieces of plywood to size, I strapped them to my tripod and got through the workshop. I ended up liking the rig so much, I polished it up a bit and have been using it ever since. The best part is that it weighs less than a pound and is rock solid even in strong winds. It is by far the lightest rig I have ever used.

Capacity: will hold most any reasonable sized painting panel
Time to make: about 1 hour
Cost: under $15.00
Panel Easel Plan - Inside

Materials:
- 1/4" Plywood:
  2@ - 9"X12"
  2@ - 3/4" x 2"
  2@ - 3/4" x 1 1/4"
  1@ - 2"x2"
  1@ - 3/8" X 12"
- 2 - 5/8" long-wide head (phillips) screws (for resting the paint panel on)
- 2 - 1" x 1/2" hinges w/screws
- 4 - small 3/8" phillips screws
- 1 - T-NUT 1/4-20 X 5/16"

Tools:
- saw, drill & bits, wood glue, clamps, shellac

Additional materials for set up:
- Ball head tripod - I like the Dolica AX620B 62-Inch Proline Tripod and Ball Head
- 4 small clips
- 2 small bungee cords
Panel Easel Plan - Outside
plywood pieces cut and ready to assemble

all parts glued in place

glue and clamp pieces in place

Palette stop/rest piece in place
hole drilled and T-nut inserted

hinges pre-drilled and screwed in place
anchor screw and relief hole in place

tripod mount screwed to T-nut
- additional 4 small screws drilled and inserted for added stability

the tips of the screws may be “proud”
- file them down if needed
assembled inside

assembled outside
Paint panel secured via bungee cord

Paint easel secured on the back via bungee cord

Tripod secured to the back
Paint Palette

**Materials:**
- Plexi-glass - 6” x 8 3/4”
- drywall corner protector (clear plexi) - 7 pieces cut to 6”
- use 5 minute epoxy to glue the shelves in place

Store the above paint holder in a plastic freezer box. It packs well in a backpack for field painting. It can be stored in the freezer in between paint sessions to prolong the oil paint.

**Mixing Palette:**
- I use gray disposable paint palette paper pads. I cut them down to 6”x9”
Paint Palette

paint palette parts prepared

paint palette and storage container

paint palette glued and assembled